

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2581

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 14083

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, TU, CY, UR

SUBJ: IL'ICHEV MISSION ON CYPRUS QUESTION

REF: A. MOSCOW 13800

B. MOSCOW 13850

1. DURING LUNCHEON CONVERSATION SEPTEMBER 16, MFA SECRETARY GENERAL Y.N. CHERNYAKOV IMPLIED THAT DEPUTY MINISTER IL'ICHEV'S MISSION TO ANKARA, ATHENS AND NICOSIA WAS DESIGNED TO KEEP ALIVE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CYPRUS. PERSONALLY CHERNYAKOV DID NOT EXPECT IL'CHEV TO ACHIEVE ANY "BREAKTHROUGH" AS A RESULT OF HIS TALKS SINCE THE PARTIES INVOLVED ARE HOLDING FAIRLY RIGIDLY TO THEIR PRESENT POSITIONS. NEVERTHELESS, CHERNYAKOV THOUGHT IT POSSIBLE THAT POSITIONS OF DIRECTLY INVOLVED PARTIES COULD CHANGE GRADUALLY AS A RESULT

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OF SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO INTERNATIONALIZE THE CYPRUS QUESTION.

THIS COULD BE ACHIEVED THROUGH A CONFERENCE SUCH AS THAT PROPOSED BY THE USSR OR PERHAPS, THROUGH DISCUSSION AT THE UNGA.

2. WE UNDERSTAND VIA THE TURKISH AMBASSADOR HERE THAT, DURING HIS TALKS IN ANKARA, IL'ICHEV WAS INTERESTED IN GAINING RENEWED TURKISH ASSURANCE THAT ANKARA IS NOT OPPOSED TO A SOVEREIGN CYPRUS. IL'ICHEV ALSO REPORTEDLY EMPHASIZED TO THE TURKS THAT, WHATEVER DIFFERENCES MAY EXIST OVER CYPRUS, THE SOVIET UNION SEEKS A CLOSE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH TURKEY. IL'ICHEV APPARENTLY TOOK A MILDLY NEGATIVE ATTITUDE WITH THE TURKS TOWARD A UNGA DEBATE ON CYPRUS, SAYING IT COULD BE A COMPLICATING FACTOR.

3. COMMENT: FAILING GENERAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, IL'ICHEV'S MISSION, AS WE SEE IT, IS ATTEMPT TO KEEP ALIVE THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME ROLE FOR MOSCOW IN FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS ON CYPRUS. IT IS PROBABLE THAT IL'ICHEV HAS SOUGHT TO TEST THE WATERS ON REACTION TO A UNGA DEBATE. THE SOVIETS NO DOUBT KNOW THAT ADVOCACY OF A WIDE-RANGING UNGA DEBATE OVER CYPRUS IS LIKELY TO CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR THEM IN TURKEY. THIS WOULD ACCOUNT FOR IL'ICHEV'S CAUTION IN DISCUSSING THE MATTER IN ANKARA. MY GREEK COLLEAGUES HERE BELIEVE THAT TURKEY WOULD NOT WELCOME ANY ATTEMPT TO INTERNATIONALIZE THE CYPRUS QUESTION, BECAUSE ANKARA WOULD VIEW SUCH A DEVELOPMENT AS A MEANS OF BUILDING PRESSURE ON TURKEY TO MODERATE ITS STAND ON CYPRUS. IL'ICHEV'S TASK IS THUS PROBABLY TO ASSESS HOW MOSCOW CAN BEST PLAY A UNGA DEBATE ON CYPRUS TO KEEP ITS HAND IN CYPRIORT DEVELOPMENTS (AND TO KEEP THE FOCUS AWAY FROM THE GENEVA FORUM); AND AT THE SAME TIME TO MAXIMIZE GROWING POSSIBILITIES FOR BETTER RELATIONS WITH ATHENS WHILE STRIVING TO KEEP DAMAGE TO SOVIET-TURKISH RELATIONS AT A MINIMUM.

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